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RESTORATION OF CHANNEL OF SOUTH CANADIAN RIVER, INDIAN TERRITORY.

JUNE 17, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. CURTIS, of Kansas, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany S. 4759.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, having had under consideration the bill (S. 4759) to authorize the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway Company to straighten and restore the channel of the South Canadian River, in the Indian Territory, at the crossing of said railroad, report the same favorably, with the recommendation that it be passed.

The South Canadian River is a nonnavigable river in the Indian Territory, and under authority of Congress the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway Company built its railroad through the Indian Territory in 1872 and 1873, and bridged said river, and has kept and maintained a bridge at its crossing of said river ever since, and some years ago built a fine steel bridge (in lieu of the old bridge, and at the same point), which it has ever since and still maintains.

On May 5 and 6, 1898, violent and unprecedented floods (certainly without precedent since the great floods of 1844) occurred in said river, and the river overflowed its banks and made a new channel for itself about 1.2 miles north of the old channel, and washed out the railroad bed across the South Canadian Valley north of the steel bridge, resulting in an interruption of traffic on said road till May 15, 1898. The company has repaired the roadbed as it best could, and has built across said new channel a temporary bridge about 1,400 feet long.

The railroad is threatened with constant danger from the flooding of the new channel, the washing away of its roadbed in the Canadian Valley, and the bridge across the new channel.

The present crossing of the South Canadian by the steel railroad bridge is the proper crossing for the railroad, and almost an ideal one, with a rock bluff on the south and a rock bottom for river bed, with piers and abutments on solid rock, and it has safely withstood all floods since its erection. The old crossing should not be abandoned.

The practical method of restoring the river to its old channel and maintaining it there, so that the river will pass under the steel bridge

of the railroad, is to build a channel from near the steel bridge westwardly to the South Canadian River at the point mentioned in the bill, and this channel the accompanying bill authorizes the railroad company to construct at its own sole expense, and provides for condemnation proceedings in the United States courts for the Indian Territory and for full compensation to all occupants of lands for all property taken or damaged by the construction of the channel. The bill also preserves the existing boundary line between the Creek and Choctaw nations. The interests of the occupants of the flooded lands, the public, and the railroad unite in requiring this work to be done. The principal chiefs of both the Choctaw and Creek nations also approve the proposed legislation.

In the judgment of the committee there is a present existing emergency for the passage of the bill.

